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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003623

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SUBJECT: PM ADVISOR ON ISTANBUL MINISTERIAL, UNSCR RENEWAL,  
STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP AND LEGISLATION

REF: BAGHDAD 3607

Classified By: Charge d, Affaires Patricia Butenis for Reasons 1.4 (b) a  
nd (d)

[¶1.](#) (S) Summary: Prime Minister, s Chief of Staff Dr. Tariq Abdullah took on board the necessity that the PM attend the Istanbul Neighbors, conference and said the PM had not decided whether to attend, at an October 30 meeting with Charge and POLMIL Minister-Counselor. Passed a draft letter on the GOI request to renew United Nations Security Council resolution, Abdullah raised concerns at the timeframe required for GOI approval of the letter given the current political climate but promised to work together to get it done. CDA pressed for a quick response on the Strategic Partnership Declaration (SPD) and for progress on key benchmark legislation. End Summary.

PM Must Attend Istanbul Ministerial;  
PM Working Hard on PKK Issue  
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[¶2.](#) (C) CDA urged Abdullah that the Prime Minister attend the Istanbul Neighbors, Conference. Abdullah said the PM is interested in going, but if President Talabani goes, both do not need to attend. He highlighted that the GOI hoped the PKK issue would not take over the conference. Noting FM Zebari, s opinion that neither the PM nor the President would attend (septel), CDA said it was absolutely crucial that the PM be in Istanbul. Abdullah conceded that he did not believe the PM had made a decision yet.

[¶3.](#) (C) Abdullah also raised the concern that the PM be treated well. The October 25 delegation complained of ill-treatment, Abdullah noted; we cannot guarantee a serious incident would not occur should the PM be treated similarly. POLMIL Minister-Counselor said the delegation, s willingness to go to Ankara was very positive; Iraq and Turkey should work together to solve the problem through diplomacy. It keeps the temperature down and leads to solutions. CDA said the U.S. would urge the importance of the PM being treated with respect.

[¶4.](#) (C) The GOI position against the PKK has been clear from the beginning, Abdullah said. The PM calls the PKK a terrorist group, and we have closed PKK offices. The PM is working hard to help Turkey overcome its problems, he said, and we are keen to preserve good relations with Turkey.

UNSCR Renewal May Be Harder This Year  
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[¶5.](#) (S) CDA passed to Abdullah an updated draft GOI letter to request renewal of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, noting it was based on what Iraq sent last year.

Abdullah asked if the renewal could be postponed or even extended one to two months. POLMIL Minister Counselor said the resolution expires at the end of the year and normally renewals were for a period of one year. We are starting now because it was important to get the job done well before the resolution expires.

¶6. (S) Abdullah said he was not sure two months would be enough time to complete the process; two things are new this year that will make Iraqi approval more complicated:

-- the Sadrists have left the Itelaf coalition and so will be more difficult to keep on board;

-- the Council of Representatives (COR) has made a decision that it must approve it by vote.

¶7. (S) POLMIL Counselor noted the COR may recess at the end of the year and wondered if "COR approval" could be construed to mean consultations rather than a floor vote. If the government were to seek a vote, it would be need to be confident it had sufficient support in advance. CDA pointed out that if the resolution is allowed to expire, it would mean that, without a mandate, MNF-I and the Coalition would have no legal basis to remain in Iraq.

¶8. (S) Abdullah reassured that we will work together and get the request letter completed on time. PM Advisor Rikabi will likely lead the GOI,s efforts, along with FM Zebari.

#### Strategic Partnership Declaration Soon

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¶9. (S) CDA noted that the White House has given the highest priority to the Strategic Partnership Declaration (SPD) and pressed for a response soonest, looking ahead to the likely Washington visit by the PM mid-month for a signing ceremony. Abdullah said National Security Advisor Mowafuq Rubaie is returning soon, and they would respond today or tomorrow.

#### PM IS PUSHING BENCHMARK LEGISLATION

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¶10. (C) Asked about progress on key legislation such as de-Ba,athification and provincial powers, Abdullah responded that the PM had just held another meeting with Itelaf, where he reasserted his desire to see progress on these laws. Abdullah noted that the CoR approved the appointment of two technocrat ministers today (reftel).  
BUTENIS